

# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1928 Bentley 4 1/2 Litre

Lot sold	<b>USD 832 800 - 1 110 400</b> GBP 600 000 - 800 000 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1928	Zustand	Gebraucht
Chassisnummer	MF3157 (see text)	Standort	
Zahl der Sitze	2	Kraftstoff	Benzin
Antrieb	Zweirad	Außenfarbe	Sonstige
Losnummer	332		

### Beschreibung

1928 Bentley 4½-Litre Tourer  
Coachwork by Vanden Plas  
Registration no. YX 7850  
Chassis no. MF3157 (see text)

W O Bentley proudly debuted the new 3-litre car bearing his name on Stand 126 at the 1919 Olympia Motor Exhibition, the prototype engine having fired up for the first time just a few weeks earlier. In only mildly developed form, this was the model which was to become a legend in motor racing history and which, with its leather-strapped bonnet, classical radiator design and British Racing Green livery has become the archetypal vintage sports car.

Early success in the 1922 Isle of Man Tourist Trophy, when Bentleys finished 2nd, 4th and 5th to take the Team Prize, led to the introduction of the TT Replica (later known as the Speed Model). However, by the middle of the decade the 3-Litre's competitiveness was on the wane and this, together with the fact that too many customers had been tempted to fit unsuitably heavy coachwork to the excellent 3-Litre chassis rather than accept the expense and complexity of Bentley's 6½-Litre 'Silent Six', led to the introduction of the '4½'.

The new 4½-Litre model effectively employed the chassis, transmission, and brakes of the 3-Litre, combined with an engine that was in essence two-thirds of the six-cylinder 6½-litre unit. Thus the

new four-cylinder motor retained the six's 100x140mm bore/stroke and Bentley's familiar four-valves-per-cylinder fixed-head architecture, but reverted to the front-end vertical camshaft drive of the 3-Litre. Bentley Motors lost no time in race-proving its new car. It is believed that the first prototype engine went into the 3-Litre chassis of the 1927 Le Mans practice car. Subsequently this same engine was fitted to the first production 4½-Litre chassis ('ST3001') for that year's Grand Prix d'Endurance at the Sarthe circuit. The 4½-Litre was produced for four years, all but nine of the 667 cars being built on the 3-Litre's 'Long Standard', 10' 10"-wheelbase chassis.

The accompanying illustrated report, compiled by leading marque authority, Dr Clare Hay and incorporating copies of factory records, reveals that 'MF3157' was completed on the 10' 10" 'Standard Long' chassis with the light crankshaft engine and 3.53:1 ratio rear axle. Unusually, the engine has the same number: 'MF3157' and is correct as recorded by the factory records. Numbered '7055', the original 'D' type close-ratio gearbox, as fitted to the works team cars, is retained, as are the original front and rear axles, both stamped 'MF3157'.

Service Records show that this 4½-Litre was completed with a 'British Flexible' all-weather saloon body by R Harrison & Son of London NW1. This fabric-covered body was similar in principle to the Weymann, and Harrison set up a subsidiary company, British Flexible Coachworks Ltd, to produce its patented design. The car was retailed via Gaffikin Wilkinson & Co Ltd, one of London's larger Bentley agents, and first owned by Captain John Arthur Jeffrey of Largo House, Fife, Scotland. It was registered as 'YX 7850', a London mark.

Service Records show that minor works were carried out in September and November 1928, and then in February 1929 the car is recorded as receiving a new chassis frame following an accident.

Dr Hay: 'In the case of MF3157 the replacement chassis frame is of interest, because on inspection the dumbirons are bolted and split-pinned rather than riveted, and the pattern of bolting and pinning is Racing Shop.' In fact, the replacement chassis used by Bentley Motors is that made by the competition department and first fitted to the famous Works Team Car 'Old Mother Gun' - 'ST3001', the first production 4½-Litre - following the 1928 Le Mans race, which it had won (the original frame had cracked during the race). This chassis formed part of 'Old Mother Gun' for approximately six months, during which period it did not participate in a major race. Nevertheless, it is a matter of unique historical interest that the chassis frame in 'MF3157' is out of 'Old Mother Gun' (see Lot 358).

In 1933, 'MF3157' passed through the hands of H M Bentley & Partners, the company run by W O's brother, Horace, and was re-bodied for them using the Vanden Plas sports four-seater body taken from 'XT3633'. H M Bentley then sold the car to its next owner, one Walter Hugh Brown of St Mildred's, Guildford, Surrey, the change of ownership being recorded as 16th June 1933.

Only some four months later the Bentley changed hands again, passing to one Trevor Richard Lloyd of Frensham, Surrey on 29th October 1933. Trevor Lloyd covered some 80,000 miles during his ownership, including a tour of Europe with his fiancée. In a letter dated 7th November 1977 to Mr G L Joberns (see below) he confirms that the Lucas P80 headlights were fitted by him circa 1935, replacing the original units. An employee of coachbuilder E D Abbott, Trevor Lloyd kept 'MF3157' until 1938 before selling it to an Army officer stationed on Guernsey. It is thought that the Bentley spent the war years off the road on the island.

Issued in 1946, an old-style continuation logbook on file lists Fairman & Sons of Horley as owner at that time, followed by E Cowen (from May 1952) and then D J Kinney, a farmer with substantial land holdings in Hampshire (from April 1965). At that time painted black, the Bentley was used regularly on fine days by Mr Kinney, during whose ownership the car was maintained by Hoffman & Burton of Henley. G L Joberns was the next owner (from September 1972). Over the course of the next four years Mr Joberns carried out a body-off, 'last nut and bolt' restoration, and in 1978 won the 4½-Litre Class at the BDC's Kensington Gardens concours. Mr Joberns was an active BDC member and went on to win several other concours awards. His photographic record of the restoration comes with the car.

In 1997 the Bentley was sold to the Staystrip Group Limited, and in the year of purchase underwent a second body-off restoration, in this case by the Healey Motor Company, who blast-cleaned the

chassis and re-covered the fabric bodywork. Following a minor accident, further substantial refurbishment of the chassis and body was undertaken by P&A Wood in 2001.

In December 2005, the Bentley was purchased by the current vendor from P&A Wood, joining his private collection of pre- and post-war classic cars. Used occasionally and never raced or rallied, it has been kept professionally garaged and maintained over the course of the last 14 years by Blackmore Engineering, William Medcalf, and Jim Stokes Workshop.

Accompanying documentation includes the following: four original buff logbooks dated 1928, 1935, 1946, 1956; correspondence from previous owners; current V5C Registration Certificate; old tax discs ; old MoT certificates; P&A Wood bills 2001 after accident (£40,000); CKL Developments bills 2006/2008; Blackmore Engineering Company bills 2009/2013; William Medcalf bills 2014, 2016, 2017 (£7,000 total); Jim Stokes Workshops bill September 2018 for servicing electric pump and pressure regulator (£1,200); 57-page report by leading marque authority Dr Clare Hay detailing its originality.

A wonderful opportunity to acquire a most original and beautiful 'W O' Bentley, benefiting from restoration and routine maintenance - with no expense spared - by some of the best specialists in the business.

Bonhams 1793

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